



Report to the Auburn City Council

Action Item

8

Agenda Item No.

City Manager's Approval

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Mark D'Ambrogi, Fire Chief
Date: September 28, 2009
Subject: Development of a Strategic Plan to aid in the prevention of catastrophic wildfire in the City of Auburn

The Issue

Shall the Council approve the recommendation of developing a Strategic Plan to address the prevention of catastrophic wildfire within the City of Auburn?

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Council, by motion, approve the recommendation and authorize the Fire Chief to begin the development of a Strategic Plan to address prevention of catastrophic wildfire within the City of Auburn.

Background

The recent 49 Fire that occurred on August 30, 2009 in the north Auburn area was truly an "eye-opening" event that has gained the attention of all of us. Unfortunately, here we are again, after the fact, in addressing our community wildfire issues. City Council Member and Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council Chair, Kevin Hanley has presented to me a number of areas we need to address in preparing for wildfire within our community. The questions that arise are who and where do we begin? In an effort to guide us through this process and achieve the most successful outcome, I am recommending that a "Strategic Plan" that addresses specific issues be developed collectively by the City of Auburn and the Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council. This "Strategic Plan" will focus on three (3) main and

very broad objectives (to be refined during the planning process) that include:

1. Through education, public outreach, community involvement, and implementation programs, achieve an extremely high level of compliance by all City of Auburn residents and landowners in establishing “defensible space” on designated properties within our city.
2. Review and evaluate our current ordinances and standards; propose and or amend standards to provide a high level of enforcement authority to assist in compliance of fire safety and protection measures.
3. City of Auburn citizens to create a positive campaign program that identifies the concern and advocates support from Bureau of Reclamation top officials for fuels management on adjacent federal lands, while maintaining good working relationships.

In addition, other areas to be addressed include current projects already in progress such as the American Canyon Shaded Fuel Break and Homeowner Association maintained “open spaces”. There are many plans already in place that identify specific threats and mitigation measures in the form of projects of which include: The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), and the Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council; Strategic Fire Safe Plan, all of which identify the “what”, and the “why”. The proposed “Strategic Plan” will focus on the “how”, “who”, and “when”. This plan is intended to serve as a guide on how to accomplish predetermined objectives.

The most critical component of such plan development is the inclusion of citizens within the community in all phases of this project. It is imperative that through the Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council leadership, community involvement such as planning input and project implementation be the driving factor of such a “Strategic Plan”. This will ultimately determine the level of success in achieving desired results. Citizen involvement will begin at the plan development stage and continue through project implementation.

The City of Auburn has spent a great deal of time and resources addressing some of our known issues along the American River Canyon and continues to do so. Recently the 49 Fire revealed how truly catastrophic fire can be in our community, resulting in economical and social impacts from a Wildland

Urban Interface event. We need to evaluate all areas of our City and develop this "Strategic Plan" to address issues equally. Although certain areas may present unique challenges, devastating results due to fire may vary and need careful consideration during the planning process.

Proposed tentative timeline of events:

The following is a suggested timeline of events for this project-

September 28, 2009- Review concept with the GAAFSC (Monthly Meeting)

September 28, 2009- Present to City Council

September 29, 2009- Begin Plan Development; coordinated between City staff and the GAAFSC

October GAAFSC Meeting- Present draft; make adjustments as necessary

November/December City Council Meeting- Present Strategic Plan- implement after approval

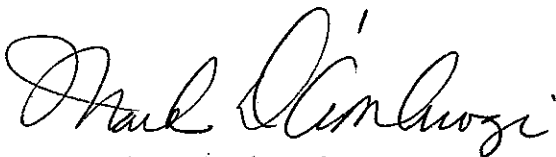
Fiscal Impact

The development of the "Strategic Plan" will have minimal if any costs; office supplies and materials. Any costs for implementation of the "Strategic Plan" will be identified in the plan itself and presented at a later date.

Attachments

Under separate cover and available in the Fire Chief's Office and City Clerk's Office-

City of Auburn Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map (color)



Mark D'Ambrogi
Fire Chief

